24 July 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Current Operations

FROM   :   Assistant National Intelligence Officer
                 for Warning

SUBJECT   :   CIA's Role in Warning

1. Here are my thoughts on CIA's role in warning. The first section addresses your ideas.

I. Statement of the challenge:

I think you should stick with an agreed definition, either the "no surprise" definition we used in the ICS Program Review Paper or the DCID definition.

II. CIA Role in Indications and Warning:

A. You might want to footnote the fact that although CIA does not put out a warning product per se, it usually makes a major contribution to the DCI Community warning product, the Alert Memorandum. CIA's role includes not only producing the economic and political (the latter in conjunction with INR) intelligence, but also integrating political, economic and military information under the guidance of the NIC. Thus CIA has a unique role in the community.

B. Submerging the warning message in the daily current intelligence is always a problem, that is why we must retain vehicles (Alert Memoranda) and machinery, (Monthly NIO-Chaired Warning Meetings) to insure true warnings are "clearly conveyed" to the policymakers.

III. CIA's FY-82 Budget in Indications and Warning:

Fully concur, the national programs support I&W requirements and analysis throughout the Community.

IV. **Suggested Improvements to CIA's Indication and Warning Activity:**

1. **Collection**

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2. **Processing**

    a) ELINT is definitely underutilized because no one
is translating it into plain English or extracting the
operational intelligence buried in the technical collection
take. However, I am not sure CIA needs an independent
capability. NSA (or DIA) should be responsible for process-
ing it and providing access to display and retrieval systems
which CIA analysts could use for I&W and current intelligence
reporting.

    b) I think the quicker we get the follow-on to the
"Interim SAFE" system, the better.

    c) The ability to transfer video and/or graphic products
among the Operations Centers would be useful, especially
if some of the graphics are computer driven

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    d) I would not assign I&W personnel to the Operations
Center. Also one could argue the advantages of placing
warning analysts at the "national" level under the NIO/W
vice at the CIA level. I do agree on the need for some
personnel dedicated to the warning problems to review events
for trends etc. I do not believe national level warning
is produced in Operations Centers. Some tactical warning,
25X1   e.g., [   ] can be handled by the Operations Centers, but
not strategic warning.

3. **Reporting**

    We need a whole family of warning products. Some for
the policymaker, e.g. the Alert Memorandum and some SNIE's;
some for the Intelligence Community managers; and some for the
exchange of ideas among analysts. Warning judgments could
be included in current publications provided they are
carefully identified, however, that would circumvent the
current Community product, the Alert Memorandum, and could
result in multiple but conflicting "warnings" from more than
one agency.

4. **Other Crisis Support**

    While I agree with most of your statements, I believe
they are also general and tend to be negative. Many of the
things you say we lack are in existence, but they are inadequate
to meet our crisis needs. I would add that our peacetime collection
coordination arrangements are not adequate for crisis periods.

2. In addition to the above I would add the following ideas:

    a. We need an exchange program with the academic community which will allow us to obtain their inputs on particularly explosive situations. This could vary from simple--like occasional liaison visits/exchanges to an elaborate and structured monthly assessments of designated crisis situations, to include quantitative judgments which could be entered into a data base for correlation, manipulation and display.

    b. I think we should especially emphasize the need for training and education. We should initiate several programs along this line.

    1) Review and audit the Defense Intelligence School to see if there is sufficient content applicable to CIA analysts. If yes, obtain quotas to the course and start sending people.

    2) If the DIA I&W course is not suitable, develop a CIA course or in conjunction with DIA turn their course into a joint course meeting broader community requirements.

    3) Compile a bibliography and build a library of books, studies, and articles on past warning situations. This would include the classified post-mortems on Community performance. A contract to a reputable civilian, e.g., [ ] would be the easiest means to accomplish this task.

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    4) The authors identified in the above project might be useful for our academic liaison program. (See 2a above) In addition, they could be called upon for guest lectures to CIA and Community analysts.

    5) Identify relevent studies and experts on learning theory, pattern recognition, group dynamics, consensus thinking, etc., to improve our understanding of the psychological aspects of warning failures. This effort should also be incorporated into our warning library and our training program(s). (para 2a (1) and (2))

    c. We should develop additional means to provoke objective evaluations of alternate hypotheses. The current monthly NIO-Chaired Warning Meetings should be strengthened for this purpose, but we also need a structured program which requires a written answer to any thoroughly researched and documented scenario. I recognize that institutionally this is most difficult to arrange. I am sure the production offices would not like to dedicate resources answering some "off-the-wall" theory of a neophyte analyst from another office or agency.

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However, if the program was structured and managed, it could be kept in bounds. Such a program could be either CIA internal or Community wide (preferred).

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